



News Release

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New Report Shows Utah's Progress Against Tobacco

(Salt Lake City, UT) - The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) today released its annual report of tobacco prevention and control activities funded through the State Tobacco Settlement Account. The results in the [UDOH's "Real People, Real Savings, Real Results" Report](#) have encouraging implications for the health of Utahns.

The UDOH's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TPCP) works with its many partners throughout the state on the priorities of preventing 4,700 Utah youth who begin using tobacco each year from starting, helping more than 200,000 Utah tobacco users in quitting, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke of more than 55,000 Utah children and other family members. This year, several program successes occurred:

- * An Adult Tobacco Quit Line was established to help thousands of Utahns quit. Demand was so impressive that, at times, Utah's call volumes met or exceeded those of states with larger populations and higher tobacco use rates. Nearly 3,600 smokers used the Quit Line and Quit Line referral services.

- *An innovative TV "Reality Campaign" was produced, chronicling the real-life quitting experiences of seven Utah smokers through television ads and news specials. Research shows the campaign's hopeful and encouraging messages made a strong impact on Utah smokers.

- *Media campaign efforts were expanded to better reach Utahns in rural areas.

- *A highly effective quitting medication, Zyban, was made available to Medicaid patients.

- *Thousands of Utah youth received anti-tobacco messages through school and community prevention activities to counter the more than \$66 million spent annually in Utah by the tobacco companies to promote tobacco use.

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Results highlighted by the report include:

- * 13,000 Utahns called the Quit Line. Quit rates were high, ranging from 25% to 30%. In the US, only about 6% of persons who try to quit smoking are successful for more than one month (Surgeon General Report, 2000).
- * 90% of adults and 94% of youth recall seeing anti-tobacco ads on TV.
- * 59% of adult smokers reduced smoking during the "Ready to Quit" campaign.
- * 20,000 students in grades 5-8 participated in evidence-based tobacco prevention curricula.
- * 13,000 students (grades K-12) created anti-tobacco ads for the anti-tobacco advertising contest.
- * More than 95% of Utah middle school students report that they will not use tobacco.

"Tobacco prevention and control is one of our top priorities - we are delighted to see such significant progress being made in the fight against the devastating effects of tobacco, but we also know that there is still much to do" said Scott Williams, M.D., deputy director, UDOH. Those future goals include increasing tobacco cessation outreach and services to meet the demand as well as expanding proven anti-tobacco education programs to all of Utah's students in grades 5-12.

However, although tobacco use rates have started to decline, much remains to be done to reach UDOH goals of tobacco-free youth and easy access to quit services for all smokers. Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in Utah: almost 13% of Utah adults (BRFSS 2000), and nearly one out of ten of Utah high school students are current smokers (YRBS 2001). It is estimated that one-third of those who continue to smoke will die from tobacco-related diseases. Additionally, Utah incurs more than \$273 million in annual smoking-related medical costs (CDC State Highlights 2002). The UDOH received additional funding to expand tobacco prevention and control activities through the State Tobacco Settlement Account, provided by the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), the landmark legal settlement in which tobacco companies agreed to compensate states for the damage their products have caused.

Heather Borski, M.P.H., C.H.E.S., program manager, TPCP said "We look forward to expanding our efforts in the coming year. Tobacco use places a huge burden on our state - we are committed to reducing that burden, and making a difference for the better in the lives of Utahns."

The report was prepared by the UDOH's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. The Social Research Institute at the University of Utah served as the independent evaluator of this project. The full report is available on the web at: <http://health.utah.gov/pio/nr/2002/0917-TobaccoFinalLegRep.pdf>